Lillian Belcher

Frontier Forts of Pocahontas Co.

The old forts used in Indian time as shown by records and tradition in territory now comprising of Pocahontas were as follows;

Fort Burnside. On Greenbrier river. Location not definitely known. Supposed to be near the station Burnside on the Greenbrier division of the C.&O. ry.

Fort Cloverlick--On Clover Creek about one and a half miles from its mouth, near the north fork of the Creek, and about 300 yards from the residence of the late C. P. Doer.

Fort Drennen---West of the public road, about 300 yards, in an old Orchard, at the foot of Elk Mt., half a mile northwest of Edroy.

Fort Buckley--At Mill Point on the site of the home of Isaac McNeel, on the northern bank of Stamping Creek about one and one half mi. from Greenbrier river. Sometimes called Frot Day or Fort Price.

Fort Warwick--Located on Deer Creek about three miles from its mouth and about four miles from Cass. This fort was near the home of Peter Warwick.

There was also an old fort near Green Bank on land formerly owned by James Wooddell and now owned by Henry Wooddell. The name of this Fort is not known. The old building was still standing a few years ago, and may still be there.

There was also an old fort on Greenbrier river near the mouth of Stony Creek on the Levi Gay farm, now owned by Pat Gay. It was at this place Baker was killed by the Indians. Richard Hill, the ancestor of all the Hills in the Levels, and Baker in the early morning went to the river to wash for breakfast when the Indians fired on them killing Baker but Hill escaped to the fort. The alarm was given that Indians were in the country and about twenty men came from the Levels but no trace could be found and on their return to the Levels, the Bridgor boys left the main party and took a near cut and were killed in the low place on the mountain now owned by W. H. Auldridge where they were waylaid and killed by Indians.

The Pocahontas Times--Marlinton, W. Va. Jan 25, 1917.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Chap. 4 -2- a. (1) Raids, depredations & massacres.

North of the present boundary of Virginia, and particularly near the junction of the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers, the Indians were numerous and their villages large. The principals of these tribes were the Delawares, Mingoes and Shawnees, the greater part of whom moved westward when the French were forced to abandon their position at the forks of the Ohio river. When improvements were commenced by the whites, therefore, in western Virginia, the country was almost entirely unhabited, excepting by wild beasts of the forests, and frequent straggling bands of Indian hunters, who wrecked their vengeance on the whites whenever opportunity afforded. The struggle on this side of the mountain was bitter and longand the pioneers had many memories of Indian atrocities.

The first effect of Braddock's defeat occurred about a month later, August 1755. The Indians appeared at the mouth of Knapps Creek and killed twelve persons and took eight prisoner. This raid ended the hostilities for the year 1755.

The summer of 1756 was a bloody one on the waters of New River and Roanoke River, but the settlements between Marlinton and Staunton were not disturbed until September and the pioneers had gotten careless. This caused the authorities a great deal of apprehension. It is certain that a big company of soldiers was garrisoned here in 1756, but must have been recalled before August 12th. It is likely that from that time on Ft. Dinwiddie, twenty-five miles from Marlinton, on Jacksons River, was the fort on which the settlers relied for protection.

From the records I have read I find that it was about Sept. 11th of the above year that the Indians appeared in the

territory protected by Ft. Dinwiddie, which included what is now Pocahontas County, and raided the settlers for four days, then withdrew with their prisoners. During the raid they killed twelve persons, wounded two, and carried off thirty-five prisoners. It is almost certain that these persons were killed and captured at their homes for there was no evidence of any fight at the fort. It was in this same raid that James Mayse was killed and his family taken prisoners.

It is interesting to recall the fact that on the banks of Marlins Run, afterwards called Birds Run, is the burial place of a little child that was dashed to death by an Indian warrior, when overtaken by a party of Bath and Rockbridge men, seeking to rescue Mrs Mayse, her son Joseph, an unmarried woman with an infant in her arms, a Mr. McClenachan and some other captives. The burial place is a few rods diagonally from the east angle of the old barm owned by Uriah Bird, on the margin of the stream. The infant was buried at the foot of a tree where it had been found a few minutes after its death. The burial took place a few hours later before the pursuers set out on their return. The grave was dug with hunting knives, hatchets and naked fingers. The covering of the grave was completed with heavy stones to prevent foxes and other animals from getting at the remains. This was the first white child known to history to have died and been buried west of the Allegheny Mountains.

Joseph Mayse then thirteen years old was on a pack horse. The Indians and their prisoners were overtaken by the pursuing party just after crossing the Greenbrier River at the Island ford, and the horse upon which Joseph Mayse was riding became frightened, and ran off. It became entangled in a grape vine and the boy

was pulled off into a thicket of nettles. The Indians were so closely pressed that they did not have time to turn and kill the boy. The Indians were pursued some distance up Stony Creek and Indian Draft but could not be overtaken. On their return the pursuing party picked up the young prisoner, still in the nettles near the fording and took him back to the settlement. Mrs. Mayse, Mrs. Sloan and the nameless white girl were taken to the Indian towns near Chillicothe, about 275 miles from Marlinton by the route taken by their captors. Fron here they made their way toward Detroit. By the aid of friendly Indians they received directions, and finally reached Pennsylvania and then home, after an absence of about fifteen months. Some years after his rescue, Joseph Mayse fought in the Battle of Point Pleasant. In this battle he was severly wounded. He suffered from this wound for about forty years when he had his leg amputated above the knee. At this time Dr. Charles Lewis came all the way from Lynchburg and remained with his patient six weeks. Joseph Mayse served as magistrate between forty-five and fifty years, and was twice sheriff. His memory was considered as reliable as an official record. His health was good and he lived to be eighty-nine years old.

At one time, when the Indians were seen prowling around in the neighborhood of Warwick's Fort, which is situated at the forks of North Fork and Deer Creek on an elevation of ground that commands a fine view of the surrounding country, the settlers made haste to the fort. Early in the morning a man by the name of Sloan left the fort and crossed the North Fork Creek to a melon or potato patch. When he hadn't returned by noon, a party went in search for him. They found him dead and scalped with an arrow through

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his body. Deeds like this were dear to the hearts of the Indians; these were the deeds that made a real warrior out of an Indian, and for which honor any Indian would risk his life over and over again.

At one time Thomas Jarvis, whose home was in a field now owned by C. C. Arbogast, went in search of his cow. When he came back, the Indians had rifled his house, had taken his feather bed tick and left the feathers emptied on the floor; they had also taken all the blankets, kettles, butcher knives and bear meat.

About this time, 1780, Elizabeth Galford, fourteen year old daughter of Thomas Galford, was sent on an errand and was never heard or afterward. The settlers far and near searched for the missing girl but she was never found. While searching along the creeks, an Indian trail was discovered and some evidence that the girl had been captured by the Indians. Some of the settlers followed the trail as far as possible but finally had to give it up.

After the attack on Donnelly's fort in May 1778, the Indians made no attempt to effect further mischief in the Greenbrier country until 1780. The fort at Point Pleasant guarded the principal pass to the settlements on the Kanawha, in the Levels, and on the Greenbrier river, and the reception with which they had met at Col. Donnally's convinced them that not much was to be gained by going into that section of the frontier. But as they were now making great preparations for effectual operations against the whole border country, a party of them was despatched to this portion of it for the purpose of rapine and murder, and to ascertain the state of the country and its capacity to resist invasion.

The party then sent into the Greenbrier country consisted of twenty-two warriors, and committed their first act of atrocity near the house of Lawrence Drinnan, about twelve miles above the

Little Levels or about two miles above Marlinton. Henry Baker and Richard Hill, who were staying at Drinnan's, going early in the morning to the river to wash, were shot at by the Indians. The exact spot, I am told by Mr. T. S. McNeel, is near where the cattle barn now stands on the Pocahontas County Fair Grounds. Baker was killed but Hill escaped and went back to the house. When the Indians fired at Baker, he was near a fence between the river and Drinnan's and within gunshot of the latter place. Fearing to cross the fence for the purpose of scalping Baker, they prized it up, and with a pole fastened a noose around his neck, drew him down the river bank, scalped and left him there.

Fearing an attack on the house, Mr. Drinnan made such preparations as he could to repel them, and sent a servant to the Little Levels, with the news and to procure assistance. He presently returned with twenty men, two of whom were killed as they proceeded toward Drinnan's, by the savages who lay in ambush awaiting them. The men remained there during the night. In the morning, seeing nothing of the Indians, they buried Baker and set out on their return to the Levels, taking with them all who were at Drinnan's and most of their property.

When they arrived at the forks of the road at Mill Point, the party debated among themselves as to whether they would take the main route leading through a gap which was a favorable situation for an ambuscade, or continue on the farther but more secure way. All except the two Bridger boys and Nathan, a colored boy belonging to Lawrence Drinnan, agreed to come down by the Waddell place situated in the Marvin neighborhood, this being the longer but more open route. The three boys took the mountain trail through "The Notch"on the Auldridge mountain.

both of the Bridger boys were killed and buried at Mill Point fort on the knoll now occupied by the Lanty McNeill residence. The colored boy was saved by stopping to tie his moccasin. The whoop of the Indians was heard signalling from Gillilian Mountain, Auldridge Mountain, and the head of Stamping Creek, informing each other that the whites were aroused and that they must flee.

They next proceeded to the house of Hugh McIver (McKeever) where they killed the owner and took his wife prisoner. In going from here, they met John Prior, who with his wife and infant were on their way to the country on the south side of the Big Kanawha. Prior was shot through the breast, but anxious for the fate of his wife and child, stood still until one of the Indians came up and laid hold of him. In spite of his severe wounds, Prior proved too strong for ~~for~~ the Indian, and the other Indians not interfering, he forced him to disengage himself from the struggle. Seeing that no violence was offered to Mrs. Prior or the infant, Prior walked off without any attempt being made to stop or otherwise molest him. The Indians had allowed him to depart expecting him to obtain assistance and endeavor to regain his wife and child, and that an opportunity of waylaying any party coming from this view would then be afforded them. Prior returned to the settlement, told of the abovd incidents and died that night. His wife and child were never again heard of, and it is thought more than likely that they were murdered on their way, being unable to travel as fast as the Indians wished.

The next went to a house at Edray, occupied by Thomas Drinnan and a Mr. Smith with their families. There they made prisoners of Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Drinnan and a child, and going on their way toward their towns killed an old gentleman by the name of Monday and his wife.

These were the last outrages committed by the Indians in the

Greenbrier Settlements. Although the war was carried on by them for years against the frontier settlements, they did not again attempt an incursion into it. Its earlier days had been days of tribulation and woe, and those who were foremost in occupying and forming settlements in it, had to endure all that savage fury could inflict.

Materials from:

Wither's Chronicles of Border Warfare.
Articles written by Roscoe Brown and published in the Pocahontas Times
Pocahontas County History by Dr. William T. Price.
Hardesty's Historical & Geographical Encyclopedia.

Jan. 8, 1940 Pocahontas

Nelle Y. MCLaughlin,
Second Ave.
Marlinton, W. Va.

Chapter 4-Section2-parts a & b--

Many of our troubles grew out of the right to take the Indians' lands from them. In 1774 so many white people had taken up land on the west side of the divide and made their homes there that there was enough to form a colony but there was not a paper title. The treaty of 1772 had established the Alleghenies as a dividing line and shortly afterward the settlers came into that part of Virginia. But they had to fight for it. From the time that Braddock was defeated on the Monongahela river, the mountaineers held on by the hardest. They lived in stockade forts and every man had to be an Indian fighter. Every summer Indian bands came into the country and there were so many cases of families killed and tortured that the mountain boys were bred in the hatred of Indian foes.

The whites were obliged to kill the Indians in order to defend themselves. At one time when the Indians were seen prowling around the fort near Greenbank, all the settlers hastened to the fort. The next morning a man left the fort and never came back again. When a party went in search of him about noon, they found him dead. The Pioneer William Warwick, knowing the ways of the Indians, knew they would be on the job bright and early the next morning, and in order to give vent to his feelings for the death of his friend, he left the fort in the night and concealed himself on the banks of Deer Creek. The Indian made bold by his success and thirsting for more glory, came into sight. At about this same time a shot rang out and the Indian fell dead. The wildest excitement pre-

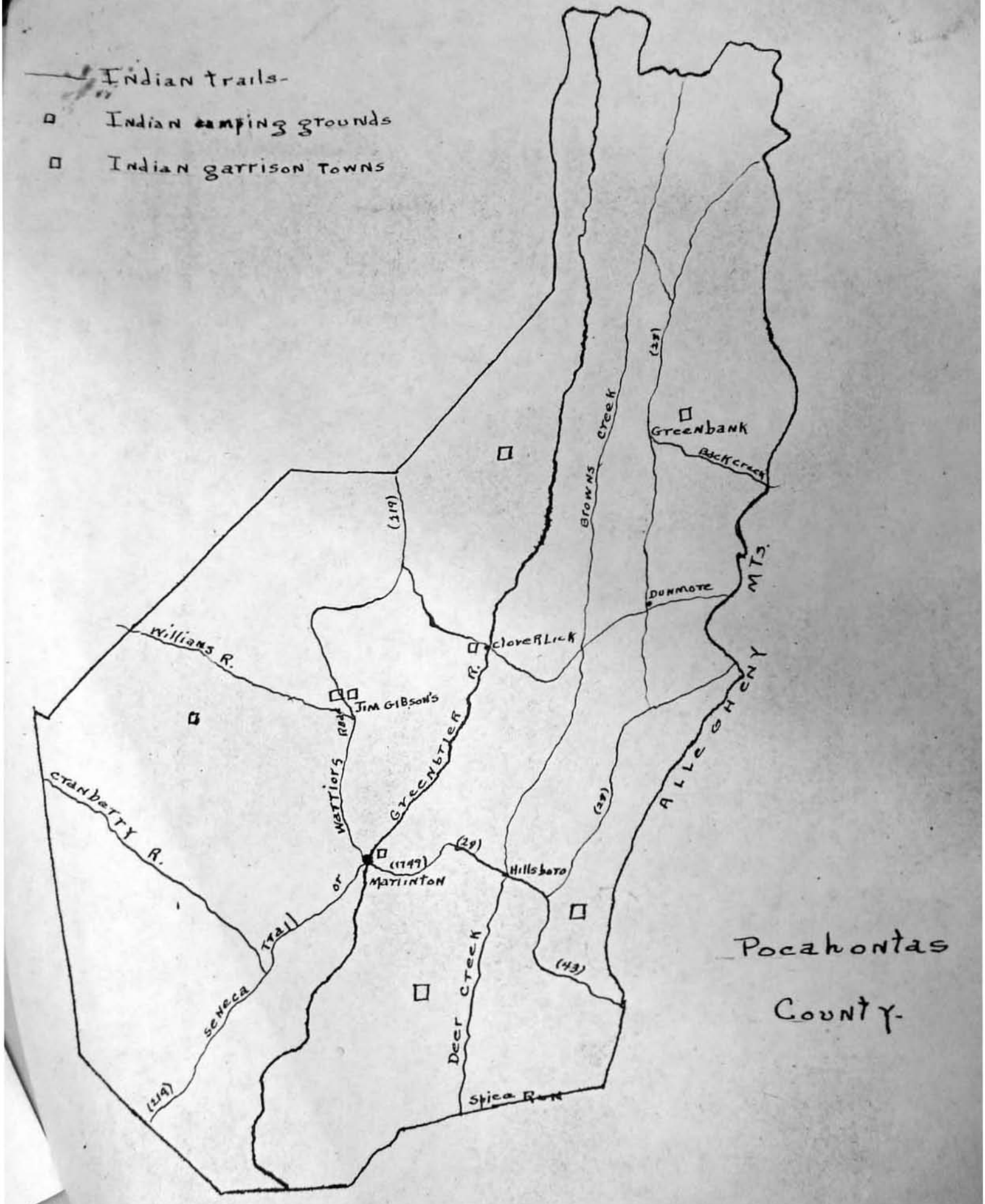
vailed at camp when one shot and one cry rang out. The Indians soon scattered.

At another time a band of Indians was seen passing through apparently doing no harm, but the settlers took no chances and fired on them, and in the scirmish one of the warriors was wounded; The Indian was taken to a glade near Arborvale, and secreted until he was able to hear from the Ohio towns. Thus the name Hospital Run.

Some months afterward, Thomas Galford and Samuel Gregory went to the Indian towns, in search of the child Elizabeth Galford who had been taken by the Indians. The two men lingered about town, trying to trade furs with the Indians, hoping in this way to get information about the girl. They finally gave up hope and stole a pair of fine horses, hitched them some distance from town, and went back to wait in ambush for the Indians. They killed two of the three Indians and took their ornaments, which were kept for many years. The bracelets were burned when Thomas Galford, Junior, lost his home. One of the horses was sold to John Bird, an ancestor of the Bird relationship, on upper Back creek. The other was bought by John Harness, a trader from Staunton.

The only instance I can find of the whites intermarrying with the Indians is that of Jim Bridger. He is claimed by some as a native of Pocahontas County. The name Bridger is familiar in this County. There is Bridger Gap where another James Bridger was killed by the Indians; Bridger Mountain at the head of Swago

(peek) and the Bridger Place at the tunnel above town are names that we all know. Anyway, it seems that Jim Bridger had two Indian wives, not at the same time, but he married one Indian woman and when she died , he married another. He died about 1877, aged seventy-seven years. He was a highly respected man and looked upon as one of the heroes of his time.


Indian trails-
Indian camping grounds
Indian garrison towns
Greenbank
Back Creek
Browns Creek
(33)
(219)
Dunmore
Mts.
Allegheny
Clover Lick
Williams R.
Jim Gibson's
Greenbrier R.
Warriors Road
Cranberry R.
(1749)
Marlinton
or
(29)
Hillsboro
(39)
Seneca Trail
(219)
Deer Creek
(43)
Spice Run
Pocahontas
County-

April 18, 1940

Nelle Y. McLaughlin
Marlinton, W. Va.

NB

POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Chapter 4 - Section 2.

It was just one hundred and sixty-five years ago when irate West Virginians paid off a long standing grudge against the Ohio Indians at Point Pleasant. Ever since the close of the French and Indian was, 1763, the Indian Nations who resented being "sold down the river" by the French, continued to pester the frontiersmen by murderous raids and sneaking attacks. In May, 1774, the House of Burgesses authorized the raising of an army and no time was lost in getting down to business. Each county already had a well organized militia system. Gen. Andrew Lewis was given command of the southern wing of the army which included Augusta, Botetourt and Fincastle. Botetourt included the Greenbrier Settlements. The troops were massed at present Lewisburg. Capt. John Stuart commanded a company of thirty-seven men raised from the vicinity of the present Pocahontas County. His sergeants were James Donnally, Chas. O'Hara, and Harriman Skidmore. His musketeers were Daniel Yorkman, Samuel Williams, Wm. O'Hara, Robert O'Hara, James Pauley, Archibald McDowell, Wm. Hogan, Andrew Gardiner, Quavy Lockhart, Samuel Sullivan, Thomas Ferguson, John McCandles, Thomas Gillispie, Henry Lawrence, John Crain, Wm. Dyer, Edward Smith, John Harris, Joseph Currence, William Clendenin, Spencer Cooper, Daniel Taylor, Jos. Day, Jacob Lockhart, Geo. Clendenin, John Burke, Charles Kinnison, William Ewing, John Doherty, John McNeel, and Jos. Campbell. The names of these men should be emblazoned in bronze at Marlinton for they had

the honor of engaging in the last colonial pitched battle on Virginia soil and at the same time, in the preliminary battle for American independence. Captain Stuart's Company had the honor of being the first to march out of Camp Union (Lewisburg) for the battle front on the Ohio one hundred miles away, Sept.6, 1774. The rest of the little army of five hundred rifty men followed in four days, and they reached "the Point" October 9th. Before breakfast the next morning the battle was on against a superior number of Indians commanded by the famous chief, known to the Virginians as Cornstalk. The battle waged furiously throughout the day without victory or defeat to eigher side. Virgil Lewis says, "General Lewis now knew that if the battle was not ended before night settled down upon the field, it would be a night of massacre, or the morrow a day of great doubt, and he resolved to throw a body of men into the rear of the Indian army. He therefore sent three of the most renouned companies on the field to execute this movement. They were those of Capt. George Mathews, John Stuart, and Evan Shelby, the latter now commanded by his son, Lieut, Isaac Shelby. They were called from the front, then proceeded up the Kanawha to Crooked Creek, then up Crooked Creek to their destination, and poured a destructive fire upon the Indian rear". This coup caused the Indians to retreat. The battle was ended. Let Pocahontas County people note that their company under Captain Stuart helped deliver the knock out blow. Three of Stuart's men suffered wounds during the battle - Kinnison, William Clendenin,

and Thomas Ferguson. Thus did Greenbrier Valley men valliantly acquit themselves on this first field of battle for American Independence. Had not Gov. Dunmore stopped them at the Ohio, these Virginians would doubtless either annihilated the Ohio Indians on their own ground or driven them out of the country.

(This was taken from an article written by A. E. Ewing, of Grand Rapids, Michigan and published in the Pocahontas times October, 1939.)

The following is a note written by Calvin Price, Editor of Times:

Naturally, I agree with Mr. Ewing's suggestion of an appropriate bronze marker with the names of our Indian fighters thereon. Probably someday we will stir ourselves and do this belated honor. There is a rub however, and that is the fact that what now embraces Pocahontas was divided between Augusta and Botetourte counties back in the time of the Revolution. Everything north of Swago was considered Augusta and below that creek was considered Botetourte - no line having been surveyed until 1785, eight years after the formation of Greenbrier in 1777, as between Harrison and Greenbrier. While the roster of Captain Stuart's has been preserved, so many of the rosters of Augusta county have been lost. Off hand I would say that our men went out under Capt. George Loffett, and I have never seen a list of his soldiers. He spent most of the summer of 1774 repairing the fort at

Clover Lick, and recruited his men from this section. Off hand, again I can recall some of them: the Warwicks, the Camerons, the Sitlingtons, the Wooddells, the Poages, the Waughs, the Slavens, William Sharp, Moses Moore, the Drinnons, the Bridgers, the Friels, John Johnson, and the Arbogasts. Until the list of our heroes can be made complete, it might be a good idea to defer the idea of the bronze tablet.

THE
POCAHONTAS TIMES

Entered at the Postoffice at Marlinton, W. Va., as second class matter.

CALVIN W. PRICE, EDITOR

THURSDAY JANUARY 30, 1941

Pocahontas
-3-

1941 JANUARY 1941						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Every once in a while a letter comes, asking me to to write what I know about the origin of local names in these mountains. If copy is scarce, I have no more sense than to attempt it.

Away up beyond the head of the Greenbrier River, is Gandy Creek, flowing to the north. This is a family name, from Uriah Gandy. Some time in the 1790's there was a court order by the then new county of Randolph directing Uriah Gandy to cut out the road toward Seneca

Well, Seneca is Indian and I have been told it means the people who live in the shadow of the rock. I have also been told the word means dark or black. I know no better than to accept both interpretations, being as shadow and dark can have somewhat similar meaning. They also tell me there are a hundred ways to spell Seneca, and that all of them are right. Finally, my brethren seem to have taken the Greek way of spelling the word, and that is all right by me.

We have the Seneca Trail, known of old as the War Road or War Path, stretching from Seneca Lakes in New York to North Georgia. Federal Road Route 219 follows this ancient main north and south highway; proof of the Indian's knowledge of the lay of the land as well as the modern engineers.

The Senecas were the standing army of the Five Civilized Nations; later to be added to the Confederacy to make the Six Nations. They were the keepers of the great back door; I have heard it called the great black door. Anyway, this back door country was largely West Virginia. The Senecas held it against the Shawnees of the west and the Cherokees of the south.

Speaking about names, when a young brave of the Five Nations wished to prove his prowess at arms he joined the Senecas—took the War path. J. Fennimore Cooper is the historian to read; his Leather Stocking Tales tell us about the Senecas and the rest in most interesting writing.

Seneca Creek, in the adjoining county of Pendleton, joins the North Fork of the South Branch in the shadow of the great stone of West Virginia, the Seneca Rocks. It is not a sparkling proposition to put forward the surmise that the Seneca tribe of Indians eventually evolved from the little local tribe which maintained its small communal village at the forks or the waters in the shadow of the great Seneca Rocks, for no one can prove it wrong.

We are in the Appalachian Mountains, and they tell me this too is Indian, meaning Endless Mountains. I always think of our mountains being endless east and west from the Ohio to Piedmont, Virginia, but I expect our Indian predecessors were talking about north and south from the Mississippi and Labrador.

Over on the Tygrats Valley there is Laurel Mountain between Elkins and Belington. A scholar wise in Indian lore once told me the orignal name for this mountain was not Laurel at all, but an Indian word meaning middle, possibly spelled something like laura. The application to the mountain is that this height of land has the greatest elevation of any ridge between the near Alleghanies on the east and the far away Ozarks in the west.

And now, of course, the Alleghany word must be considered. They say it is Indian and means the big sign or big track or big mountain. I have heard that Alleghany is a good Scandinavian word. Somwhere I think I saw the statement that Alleghanian, or something like that is the name of a leading paper over in Sweden. If this be so, maybe it is just another storm to bolster the contention that the Scand navian settlers of America a thousand years ago were absorbed by and left imprint upon the northern Indians.

Tygarts Valley was named from David Tygart, who came to the valley in the 1,50's; left when the Files and other families were massacred.

Mingo is the name of the Indian village "at the head of the Ohio." The Mingoes were here at the time of Braddock's defeat in 1755. The Six Nations were allies of the British the Mingoes were blamed with siding with the French. In 1766, they had been moved from Mingo Flats to Mingo Bottoms, near Wheeling. About 1800 they were moved to the Muskingum River in Ohio. In 1838, the Mingoes traded their Ohio land, to the government for lands in Kansas. Later they moved to Indian Territory, now Oklahoma. In 1766 there was about fifty families of the Mingoes; the the last I heard, some years since, there were over sixty families.

About the time the Mingoes moved from near Wheeling to the head of the Muskingum, there appeared all of a sudden one day in the Greenbank community several hundred Indians, men, women and children, with many horses and dogs. They said they were back from a season of hunting in the ancestral hunting grounds.

Along about 1838, when the Mingoes sold out their Ohio lands, the local tradition is that the Williams River country filled up one day with hundreds of Indians—men, women and children, with many horses and dogs. They said they were back for a farewell bear hunt in their ancestral hunting grounds.

Shavers Mountain and Shavers Fork of Cheat River and Shavers Run are all named for Peter Shaver, a soldier of the American Revolution, who was killed by Indians at his home on Tygarts Valley River along about the year 1781.

Cheat River is any body's guess how come its name. There is false wheat, cheat, still to be found along its course. On Shavers Mountain, the moss covered stock rock still fool you by letting you suddenly down into pits covered by moss. It is still a surprise to the traveler to climb a couple thousand feet up from Greenbrier River to find another on the top of the mountain, flowing in the opposite direction. Some where I saw the name Cheatnah, This the name of a mountain down Alabama way in the original Cherokee country. I have often wondered about these somewhat similar names so many hundred miles apart, but I never took the steps to check up on the matter through the experts in the Bureau of Ethnology down in Washington.

The Greenbrier was first named Ronceverte by the French explorers It appears that ronce is brier and verte is green. The greenbriers still persists in thickets the length of this stream. I have always had an interest to know the names the French gave to the mountains and streams of this region which they claimed as a part of their New France The ford in the Greenbrier near the present city of Ronceverte was called St Lawrence An order entered by the County Court of Greenbrier in the 1780's deals with a road from Town to the St Lawrence Ford

Speaking about French names naturally brings to mind Gauley River and Gauley Mountain. What would be more natural for French explorers to call this beautiful stream Gaule after the ancient name of France Of course I have heard about the Scotch Irish pioneer hunter coming out on the rocky bluff above mouth of Meadow River and in his surprise at seeing a stream of such size, exclaiming, "Golly, what a river!" You know that sounds so much like so many of my own explanations of things I have no knowledge of, that I never put any faith in the tale.

ship recognized ...
by a brand.

... for the care ...